

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO ISSUE AN UNDERGROUND INJECTION CONTROL (UIC) CLASS I PERMIT FOR HILMAR CHEESE COMPANY

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE

The purpose of the public notice is to solicit public comments on the proposal by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to issue a UIC permit to inject fluids underground through up to four (4) nonhazardous Class I injection wells. The permit is for Hilmar Cheese Company located at the following address:

Hilmar Cheese Company
9001 North Lander Avenue
Hilmar, CA 95324

The Draft Permit is proposing the injection of treated cheese processing facility wastewater produced at Hilmar Cheese Company. The proposed injection well(s) would be designed to inject wastewater approximately 3,350 to 4,150 feet below the ground surface, into the undifferentiated Paleocene-Upper Cretaceous sands. Based on the review of the proposed well construction, operation standards, monitoring requirements, and the existing geologic setting, EPA believes the activities allowed under the proposed Draft Permit are protective of Underground Sources of Drinking Water as required under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

EPA has made a preliminary determination to approve this permit application. This action is being taken as provided by Part C of the Safe Drinking Water Act and pursuant to Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 124, 144, 146, and 147.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

All non-proprietary data submitted by the applicant, as well as the Draft Permit are contained in the Administrative Record for these proposed injection wells. This information is available for public inspection at the location listed below:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX
Ground Water Office (WTR-9)
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
Attention: Eric Byous
telephone: (415) 972-3531
byous.eric@epa.gov

A copy of the Draft Permit and Fact Sheet are also available at the following locations:

Modesto Public Library
1500 I Street
Modesto, CA 95354

**Merced Public Library
2100 O Street
Merced, CA 95340**

The Draft Permit and Fact Sheet are also available online at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region09/water/groundwater/uic-permits.html>

Comments are encouraged and will be accepted in writing (email is acceptable), at the San Francisco office for a period of **45 days** after publication of this notice. In addition, written and/or verbal comments concerning the Draft Permit can be provided during a **Public Hearing scheduled for 6:00 – 8:00 PM on September 8, 2005 at:**

**Stanislaus County Agricultural Center
Harvest Hall Training Center (Rooms D and E)
3800 Cornucopia Way
Modesto, CA 95358**

We request that oral comments provided during the Public Hearing are limited to five (5) minutes.

FINAL PERMIT DECISION AND APPEALS PROCESS

After the close of the public comment period, EPA will issue a response to comments, a final permit decision, and will notify all commenters regarding this decision. The final decision shall be to either Issue or Deny the permit. The final decision shall become effective thirty (30) days after the service of the notice of decision. Within thirty (30) days after the final permit decision has been issued, any person who filed comments on the Draft Permit, participated in the Public Hearing, or takes issue with any changes in the Draft Permit, may petition the Environmental Review Board to review any condition of the permit decision. Commenters are referred to 40 CFR Section 124.19 for procedural requirements of the appeal process.